

The La Plata Otter in its general colouring is of a somewhat deeper hue than the European species, the cheeks and throat instead of being nearly white are of a pale brown colour; the tail is longer in proportion, and tapers more gradually; the tip of the muzzle is naked, but the hairless portion is less than in that species, the boundary line between the naked part and the hair of the top of the muzzle forming almost a semicircle; the retiring extremities of this line touch the posterior angle of the nostril on each side, whereas in the common otter the boundary line of the hair of the muzzle is of a w-like form. The skull is figured in Plate 35, figs. 4, *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d*, and is compared with that of *L. Chilensis* in the next description.

"This specimen was killed by some fishermen a few miles from Maldonado, near the mouth of the estuary of the Plata, where the water is quite salt. I am not, however, by any means sure that it may not be a fresh-water species, which had wandered from its proper station; in the same manner as not unfrequently is the case with the *Hydrochaerus Capybara*. I am indebted to Mr. Chaffers, the master of the Beagle, for having kindly presented me with this specimen." — D.

2. LUTRA CHILENSIS.

Lutra Chilensis, *Bennett*, Proceedings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society of London for 1832, p. 1.

L. fusca; *vellere mediocri*, *laxo et sub-extante*; *mento, gula, et faciei lateribus, pallide fuscis*; *pedibus saturatè fuscis*; *corporis pilis ad apicem pallidè fuscis*; *caudà mediocri*; *rostri apice calvo*.

DESCRIPTION.—This species scarcely equals a full grown European otter in size. It is of a brown colour throughout; the cheeks, chin, and throat, being slightly paler, and the feet of a deeper tint, than the other parts. The fur is moderately long, rather harsh to the touch, and semi-erect: the under fur is abundant, and of a soft and silk nature. The hairs of the ordinary fur are deep brown, but tipped with a very pale brown colour. The hairs of the tail, like those of the body, are harsh and semi-erect; towards the apex, those on the upper and under part are in a slight degree shorter than those at the sides, and lie closer to the skin; these differences, however, are not very apparent on the upper side, though distinct on the under. The feet are naked beneath, with the exception of the posterior half of the tarsus. The hair of the muzzle extends only down to the posterior angle of the

nostrils, where it terminates in a straight line, leaving the tip of the muzzle naked.

	In.	Lines.		In.	Lines.
Length from nose to root of tail . . .	31	0	Length of tail	14	3

Habitat, Chonos Archipelago, (*January*.)

The Chile Otter was originally described by Mr. Bennett from a specimen presented to the Zoological Society by Mr. Cuming, but as this specimen is a young animal, scarcely half-grown, it does not present some of the characters of the species in so marked a manner as the adult. I have, therefore, availed myself of an adult specimen in Mr. Darwin's collection, to draw up the above description.

Compared with the Common Otter (*Lutra vulgaris*, Auct.) the most striking difference consists in the character of the fur: the hairs instead of being adpressed as in that species, are here semi-erect, and appear as if they had been clipped at the extremity. The fur is of a deeper colour, but has a slightly grizzled appearance, owing to the tip of each hair being of a much paler colour than the remaining part.

In the young animal described by Mr. Bennett, (which in weight was probably not more than one-third of that of the present animal) the hairs of the body are of an uniform deep brown colour; hence, if I am right in considering Mr. Darwin's animal as the same species, it would appear that the grizzled character of the fur is dependent on age.

The semi-erect fur will also serve to distinguish the present species from the *Lutra Platensis*; the fur is likewise longer, the tail is shorter, and the feet are smaller in proportion. The most important distinctions, however, are furnished by the skulls; I will, therefore, compare them.

The skull of *L. Chilensis* compared with that of *L. Platensis*, (Plate 35, figs. 4.) when viewed from above, presents but little difference in general form; it is, however, smaller in all its proportions, and the zygomatic arch is a little less convex: the palate is proportionately shorter; the tympanic bullæ are much smaller, less elevated, and wider apart, in which respect there is a greater approximation to the skull of *L. vulgaris* than to that of *L. Platensis*; but here, the tympanic bullæ are larger than in *L. Chilensis*. Both in *L. Chilensis* and *Platensis*, the sub-orbital foramina are kidney-shaped, the emarginated portion being downwards, whilst in *L. vulgaris* they approach somewhat to a triangular figure, the apex being external. In *L. Chilensis*, however, this foramen is comparatively larger than in *L. Platensis*, and the outer portion of the foramen forms the